

Appl. No. 10/227,750
Amdt. dated March 2, 2004
Reply to Office Action of December 2, 2003

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14-36 and 38-43 are pending in this application. Claims 18-34 were previously withdrawn in view of the Examiner's earlier restriction requirement. Claims 1-34 and 37 have been canceled without prejudice. New claims 44-50 have been added.

In the Office action mailed December 2, 2003, the Examiner rejected pending claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14-17 and 35, 36, 39 and 41-43, and objected to claims 38 and 40. Claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14-17, 36, 39 and 41-43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Guevel et al. (FR 2,668,176) in view of Shi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,721,179). Claim 35 was rejected as being unpatentable over Guevel et al. in view of Shi et al., and further in view of Rosenstein (U.S. Patent No. 3,769,787). Claims 38 and 40 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that claims 38 and 40 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

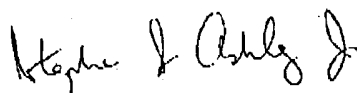
Applicant respectfully disagrees with all of the rejections, however, in an effort to expedite the application to allowance, Applicant has canceled claims 1-34 and 37, without prejudice. Applicant reserves the right to pursue canceled claims 1-34 and 37 in one or more continuation and/or divisional applications. Applicant has amended claim 38 to be in independent form, including all of the limitations of base claim 9 and intervening claim 12. Remaining claims 35, 36, 39-43 have been amended to depend on allowable claim 38. In addition, Applicant has added new claims 44-50, which also depend on base claim 38. Accordingly, all claims presently in the application are

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allowable.

For the reasons stated above, Applicant respectfully submits that the application is in a condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner believes that issues remain for discussion in this case, he is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office to Centralized Facsimile No. (703) 872-9306 on March 2, 2004. Date of Signature: March 2, 2004.

Signature: 

Karen Walker

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